arms, ammunition and explosives on the coastline, could not be overlooked; and

(b) if so, the steps are being taken to augment air and surface defences to match that of the neighbours?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) Government is aware of acquisition of sophisticated arms by neighbouring countries, and of attempts to smuggle arms and explosives into India from across the borders and through our coastlines. A constant vigil is maintained along the land borders and coastlines to check attempts to smuggle arms and explosives into the country. All developments having a bearing on national security are regularly reviewed and monitored, and necessary measures are taken from time to time to maintain appropriate defence preparedness, including air and surface defence.

Decision on the recommendations of Singhdeo Committee on Territorial Army

2615. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether decision have been taken to augment and assign a more effective role to Territorial Army, in the light of the recommendations of Shri K.P. Singhdeo Committee; and

(b) the steps taken or being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) The Report of the Territorial Army Review Committee headed by Shri K.P. Singh Deo which was submitted to the Government in August, 1996 was circulated to the three Services Headquarters of the Armed Forces as well as to the Department of Personnel & Training with a view to eliciting their views on the various recommendations. The views of the Services Headquarters have been received recently. There are varying views expressed by the Services Headquarters on the recommendations contained in the Report which will necessitate further consultations. A final decision in the matter can be taken only after such consultations have been completed.

U.S. Military base in Indian Ocean

2616. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of reports regarding a new U.S. military base in Indian Ocean;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir. Government are aware of news-items that have reported on defence cooperation between the US and Sri Lanka, including reported plans for a US naval base facility in Sri Lanka.

(b) Government are aware that the US and Sri Lanka have an on-going programme of cooperation between the defence establishments of the two countries which includes courses in defence institutions, visits of experts and joint exercises on lines similar to what exists between the US and other countries in our region. There is, at present, no proposal for provision of naval base facilities to the US by Sri Lanka.

(c) Government constantly monitor developments having implications for India's security and strategic interests and are committed to taking all steps necessary to counter any adverse impact in this regard.